



# Fort Riley POST

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## America's Warfighting Center



USDA Rural Development Undersecretary Gilbert Gonzalez (left) and Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, commanding general, 24th Inf. Div. (Mech) and Fort Riley, sign a memorandum of understanding that set up a cooperative partnership June 27 that will help Fort Riley military families build or buy homes in the region. Additionally, Deputy Garrison Commander Linda Hoeffner (far right) and USDA State Rural Development Director Chuck Banks (rear left) were a part of the signing ceremony. U.S. Sen. Pat Roberts (center right) announced an extra \$25 million appropriation for USDA guaranteed and direct home loans. U.S. Rep. Jerry Moran also took part in the ceremony.

*Post Photo by Mike Heronemus*

## Partnership aids housing needs

By Mike Heronemus  
Editor

More federal loan guarantees mean Soldiers at Fort Riley will have an easier time buying or building homes in the future. Sen. Pat Roberts (R-Kan.) announced June 27 that \$25 million in guaranteed lending immediate assistance is available through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Housing Agency. That will be added to \$47 million previously appropriated for rural home and development loans, he said.

Roberts announced the increase in funding before Maj. Gen. Dennis Hardy, commanding general of the 24th Infantry Division (Mech) and Fort Riley; USDA Rural Development Undersecretary Gilbert Gonzalez; USDA Rural Development State Director Chuck Banks; and Deputy Fort Riley Garrison Commander Linda Hoeffner signed a memorandum of understanding creating a cooperative partnership among the organizations.

Fort Riley's part of the agreement requires a \$20,000 renovation of office space so the USDA can put a representative on post to assist Soldier families and regional businesses in securing the loans. Building 384 is the tentative location for the USDA office, Hoeffner said.

Rural housing programs include guaranteed and direct loans to build or buy single-family homes, repair grants and loans to remove health and safety hazards from owner-occupied single-family homes and other assistance for multi-family housing projects.

USDA guarantees to pay off loans that established financial institutions, such as banks, make to qualified borrowers if the borrower defaults on the loan. USDA also loans money directly to qualified homebuilders and buyers. Soldier families must make no more than 115 percent of the median income reported for the county in which they want to build or buy a home. They must make no more than 80 percent of the median income for the county to qualify for a direct loan. To qualify for guaranteed loans in Clay, Dickinson, Geary, Morris and Riley Counties, a military family of three people would have to make less than \$60,050 a year. To qualify for direct loans, a family of three would have to make less than \$40,150 to build or buy a home in Clay, Geary or Morris County. They would have to make less than \$45,450 to buy or build in Riley County and less than \$41,700 to buy or build in Dickinson County.

USDA Rural Development assistance goes to individuals or developers building, buying or renovating dwellings in non-metropolitan areas with populations of 20,000 people or less. Junction City's population in the 2000 Census was 18,886. Manhattan's estimated population is 44,800. Cities in the region meeting the population restriction would include Milford, Chapman, Wakefield, Herington and White City, among others.